

2020

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H I G H L I G H T S



Hello and welcome to this, the highlights of 2020, newsletter.

For all of us at BMet and in the learning and skills sector across the region, the pandemic has posed many challenges for us and a great deal of uncertainty for our students, apprentices, employers and the partners with whom we work.

But for all the turbulence we have experienced, I think this period has shown us how resilient we can be and how we can adapt to a new way of being.

I have been so impressed with how staff and students have risen to the challenge.

This newsletter looks at how we adapted in a Covid-19 world but also at some of the initiatives we are proud of and our plans for the future.

Someone who will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the college is Pat Carvalho who was appointed as my successor in November.

Pat is due to start her BMet Principalship in the summer of 2021 and I know the college will be in good and safe hands under her leadership.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a very happy and restful seasonal break and, I hope, a 2021 that brings optimism and continued collaboration with BMet.

Cliff Hall, Principal



New Principal Appointed

At the end of November, we appointed a new Principal and CEO – Pat Carvalho. Pat will join us in June 2021 – here she shares her thoughts on the future.

"I am absolutely delighted to have been chosen to lead BMet on its continued journey to becoming an outstanding FE College in the West Midlands. Returning to Birmingham feels right particularly as I am joining a college that has come through difficult times into a good place and looking forward to the future. Visiting the College campuses confirmed this for me as I could see the pride, openness and commitment in the range of courses on offer, the engagement of staff I met and purposeful students.

"There are clearly challenging times ahead because of the impact of COVID and uncertainties surrounding BREXIT but there are genuine opportunities for BMet to provide students and the local communities it serves with the right education, training and advice and guidance to ensure they are

ready for the jobs (existing and new) that are and will become available. Working with our strategic partners and funders we have a clear strategic plan in place which I see as a blueprint that we can develop over the coming years. I am looking forward to shaping this further with stakeholders, staff, and students.

"I know the resilience of staff and their engagement to embed a culture of high aspiration, inclusion, wellbeing and leadership will ensure that we have the right resources to deliver the college's plan."



Pat Carvalho

Our Senior Leadership team



Cliff Hall
Principal



Louise Jones
Deputy Principal



Stephen Belling,
Company Secretary



Martin Penny,
Chief Financial



Fiona Yardley,
Finance Director



Sue Hopewell, Vice
Principal – Curriculum
and Quality



Ben Gamble,
Vice Principal –
James Watt College



Jan Myatt,
Vice Principal –
Matthew Boulton
College



Anna Jackson,
Vice Principal –
Sutton Coldfield
College



Alison Jones,
Director of Human
Resources and
Development



Suzie Branch-Haddow,
Director of Employer
Engagement



Rachel Jones,
Director of IT
and Data



Zoe Lee,
Director of Marketing
and Communications

New Strategy and Values

The 2018/19 academic year saw the launch of the BMet improvement and recovery plan.

Our mission and values were developed in consultation with BMet staff, students and key stakeholders. They underpin everything that we do. Here is how we arrived at our new strategy and values.

Employer input at event propelled new strategy

Twenty-five key local employers attended a breakfast meeting in early February to help BMet shape our strategic plan.

The strategic breakfast meeting was hosted by BMet Principal Cliff Hall and saw big businesses across the city lend their support to discuss the strategic direction of the college.

The new strategic plan comes just over 12 months since a college restructure that saw the appointment of Vice Principals across the three BMet colleges.

The breakfast meeting held on Wednesday 12 February was a chance to meet with key influential stakeholders to help on the development of the BMet 2020/2021 strategic plan.

The event centred around three simple questions:

1) What do employers need from us? 2) What should we be doing that we are not doing? 3) What should we aspire to?

The questions led to some very meaningful conversations that helped to shape the plan to shape the strategic plan.

Commenting on the event, BMet Principal Cliff Hall, said:

"We want to ensure our students go on to have successful careers therefore it is vital that we listen to the needs of employers as we shape our new strategy.

"In drafting this strategy, we were keen to ensure that we use local knowledge, the latest research and draw on our own collective experience, imagination and creativity to ensure that we are offering something that improves the quality of lives of our students and their families. He said.

"Ultimately, we want to set out our vision for an improved student experience that will prepare our students to lead, innovate and drive change in the region and beyond."

Strategic Annual Plan 2020/21

We were proud to unveil our new strategy this year. Covid certainly presented a curve ball but the college was able to respond actively to the key social, economic and policy changes that the Covid environment brought about. We feel that now more than ever it is critical that BMet, in collaboration with our stakeholders and partners, responds quickly to provide the best opportunities to retrain and upskill, to give our students and the communities we serve the greatest chances to secure sustained employment. Click here to read the plan:

[CLICK FOR MORE >](#)

Vision, Values, Strategic Priorities

We believe that our vision and values provide clear direction for a college that is for Birmingham and at the heart of Birmingham.

Our Strap Line

Inspiring Futures, Realising Dreams.

Our Vision

We aim to provide excellent learning opportunities to serve the needs of Birmingham and the City Region.

Our Values

- We are passionate to see our students achieve their full potential.
- We create an environment that is ready, respectful and safe.
- We see strength in our diversity and strive for equality of access and opportunity.
- We are inspired to be creative and continually develop our professional practice.
- We are three colleges, one team.

Our strategic priorities are to:

1. be a significant contributor to skills development in Birmingham and the City Region;
2. provide a consistently high-quality learning experience;
3. equip our students for the future;
4. be an inspiring place to work; and
5. have a strong financial base to invest in a sustainable future for the college.



The Covid Factor

2020 without doubt will be a year of note in the annals of history.

With terms such as quarantine, social distancing, TEAMS and Zoom it seems like our everyday lexicon will forever be changed by the words and phrases that have permeated our conversations this year and so too how we live, work and teach.

While we all have been impacted by 2020, we wanted to share a snap shot on how we have adapted this year and some of the things we have learned along the way.

Most likely to hear in 2020 – you’re on mute!

Colleges Week 2020

Colleges Week 2020 celebrated all the fantastic work done nationally by colleges all over the UK – including BMet.

The week (19 – 23 October) was a chance to celebrate and shout about all the brilliant things that colleges do, day in and day out to build communities, boost businesses, and support individuals.

The week shone a light on all the challenges thrown up by Covid and how colleges have responded.

We shared highlights of our work across all our social media platforms under the #loveourcolleges and #collegesweek hashtags.



Despite the many challenges of Covid-19 this year, BMet has continued to provide a high level of support for young people and adult learners alike. **Highlights this year for us have included:**

Supporting the FE Foodbank Friday initiative

Use of online learning tools during lockdown and beyond and adding some celebrity sparkle

Staff and students supporting individuals in lockdown through the NHS Volunteer Responders Programme

Supporting adult learners via the launch of our Career Advance Academy offering free careers advice and guidance and retraining

CONTINUED >

Covid uncovers resilient generation

We, alongside Youth Forum West Midlands (YFWM), unveiled in November, a survey giving new insights into how young people across the region are affected by Covid-19.

The survey showed that 62% took the time to help others during lockdown across the West Midlands whilst battling increased levels of anxiety.

Nearly half of respondents helped their mental health (43.5%) by communicating with friends.

The emerging picture from the survey showed a generation of creative, innovative, thinkers who show enviable resilience and adaptability despite the backdrop of Covid-19.

The West Midlands results are part of a national survey first launched in June.

Hot off the press...

On Tuesday 08 December with Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce and in partnership with Beatfreaks and Youth Focus West Midlands we undug the data a little more and changed the conversation on skills.

We hosted a skills panel with a difference made up of BMet students at transition points in their lives to look at the impact of Covid on their career and education.

Using the data as a starting point a fruitful and insightful discussion was had – we do encourage you to find the time to pour a cuppa and watch the conversation here

TAKE THE TEMPERATURE

Six months on from the release of the national “take the temperature” report, BMet and YFWM delved into the report, with its authors Beatfreaks, to explore the impact of Covid on the region’s young people.

The top three issues which young people were worried about in the region are:

- people are close to them who are at risk;
- the strain the pandemic is putting on the NHS;
- and the impending economic crisis.

Director of Employer Engagement – Suzie Branch-Haddow at BMet, said:

“We are now working with regional employers to look at this data and findings and see how we can support young people to continue their education and achieve their career aspirations.”



[To read the survey in full please click here](#)

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Launch of BMet Career Advance – your Restart and Retrain Academy

In July we announced the launch of our new training academy to boost the skills of job seekers across the city.

Not simply limited to job seekers the academy offers upskilling and retraining opportunities for everyone.

Called BMet Career Advance – the academy offers career ready services to those whose employment has been impacted because of Covid-19.

The academy helps people to plan their career, find a job and succeed at work via interactive training.

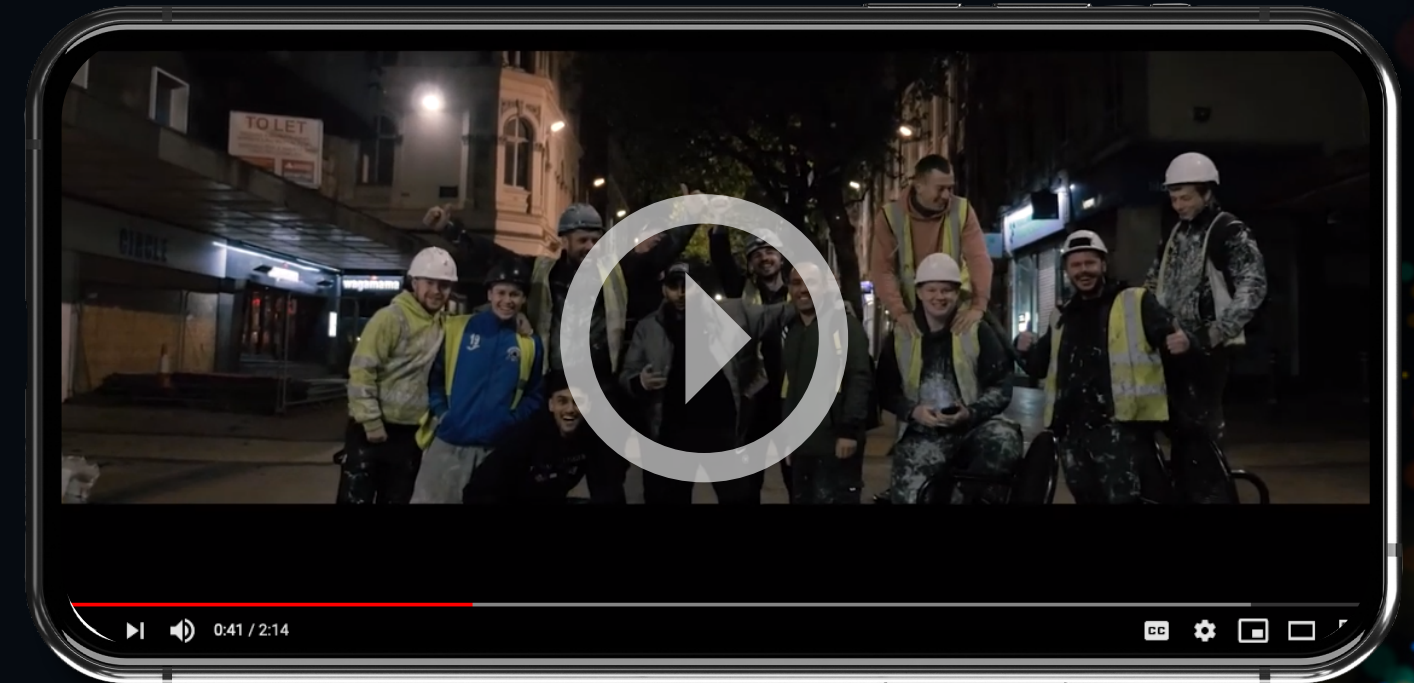
On offer is career guidance and advice, access to specific skills-based programmes aligned to local business needs.

Commenting on the launch, Cliff Hall, Principal at BMet, said: “I am so pleased that we were able to launch our Career Advance Academy this summer. Our aim is to put people firmly in the driving seat in terms of their careers whilst working closely with employers to match the skills need across the city.

“As an FE college that serves the local community of Birmingham we need to react and react quickly to ensure we can support both the local community and regional economy.”



Acclaimed spoken word artist creates video to inspire students on their next episode



Aspiring and current students at BMet were encouraged to stay positive and focused on their future goals by a celebrated local spoken word artist.

Raza Hussain, known as Wuzzamill, used his internationally-recognised artistic talents to produce the inspiring video – which relates his

passion for Birmingham with his desire to see young people succeed in life.

Filmed during lockdown and released to coincide with the start of our summer enrolment period, the video inspired a new wave of FE learners. See the video below – be ready to be inspired!

[Click here to watch the video](#)

Our trio of Colleges – Life at BMet

Here is a snap shot of some of the exciting projects our three colleges are involved in.

James Watt College

Matthew Boulton College

Sutton Coldfield College



James Watt College

New Vice Principal James Watt College

A recent addition to BMet's leadership team is Ben Gamble.



Ben is the new Vice Principal at James Watt College and has joined us with a wealth of experience having worked in further education colleges throughout the West Midlands as a lecturer, manager and more recently as a senior leader.

Ben has considerable experience as an interim manager where he has successfully supported FE colleges through significant periods of change, transition and inspection. As a Director of Dudley College, he oversaw a range of curriculum and subject areas and joined the BMet team from his most recent post as Head of Further Education at a specialist Arts college.

New Engineering director



Neil Davies joined the senior leadership team as Director of Engineering at James Watt College at the start of December. With over 20 years' experience in Further Education and within the field he is set to transform the department. His ambition is clear

- to achieve a grade one for the department and to be the best in the region and beyond. Watch this space! by clicking here:

Full steam ahead in 2021

With two new key senior figures at James Watt College – the new VP and Director of Engineering, there are ambitious plans to re-develop the campuses rail provision.



There is currently an annual shortfall of 69,000 rail engineers and to help address the gap the college is on track to deliver an impressive rail programme in 2021.

The college is collaborating with transport and construction employers to provide qualifications and apprenticeships matched to in-demand rail jobs.

Vice Principal and James Watt College, Ben Gamble, said: "One of the first areas that I

want to tackle, alongside my new director of engineering Neil Davis, is to ensure that here at James Watt College we train the next generation of world class engineers.

"The first step is looking at our rail academy. "The rail provision we offer is sound, but I want to improve on what we have and ensure our local communities are aware of the opportunities on their doorstep. "We want to show people from all backgrounds and all ages the variety of work and opportunities that lie within rail."

The revamped academy will:

- Support employment in line with UK average
- Address the disconnect between the skills that local people have and those that the Rail Sector require
- Prepare learners for the different roles in the sector

Neil Davies, Director of Engineering, commented: "Our new academy model will allow rail companies to take a hands-on approach to get the skills they need in the coming years. "The training we will provide is business led, with employer and sector-specific pathways available for school leavers, jobseekers and those already working in transport and construction."

The apprenticeship programme at James Watt College is going from strength to strength– two apprentices won national prizes in 2020.

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Rail apprentice nationally rewarded on his road to success



An engineering student at James Watt College was officially named as the “Apprentice of the Year” at a national online awards ceremony, this year.

Dean Robinson, a level 3 apprentice, who works as a technician at West Midlands Rail, was recognised for his great achievements

at the National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR) Apprenticeship Awards.

The annual event, held virtually this year, celebrates rising talent within the rail industry. Dean was nominated by the college for displaying a positive attitude and work ethic throughout his four-year apprenticeship.

Dean is also seen as being a shining star as his merits and distinctions have been followed up with a high level of competence and skill in the workplace. He has also demonstrated leadership amongst his peers.

Speaking of his award win Dean, who is currently completing his apprenticeship in Rail Engineering Technical Knowledge Traction and Rolling Stock, said: “I feel that it was great to be officially rewarded for my four years of hard work and am now looking forward to my future even more!

I applied for the apprenticeship, as I wanted a career in an industry which is calling out for the younger generation to learn the skills and knowledge required to keep trains running at optimal performance – effectively a huge “skills gap” needed to be filled.

My next steps are to get a full-time position at West Midlands Trains and to hopefully carry on in further education.”



BMet apprentice wins national cleaning company prize

A Cleaning and Environmental Services apprentice from James Watt College, was officially recognised for his top-class cleaning prowess and dedication, in 2020.

20-year-old Liam Emanuel was honoured with a certificate to celebrate his achievements on March 2 at the City and Guilds London Institute Livery Company Awards. The event was held at Mansion House in London.

The awards recognise the very best individuals and organisations from all sectors who have demonstrated exceptional achievement through training and skills development.

Liam unanimously impressed judges with his expertise and exemplary attitude. The hard-working talented apprentice stood out from the crowd for achieving high level results whilst facing personal challenges.

Speaking of his achievement Liam said: “I am so very happy to have won this award, which means so much to me. I wasn’t expecting to win, and I didn’t know awards like this existed!

“I am hoping I can use my accomplishment to show future employers what I am capable of!”

The Rt Hon Lord Mayor, Alderman William Russell and a representative of the relevant Livery Company presented Liam and other prize winners with their awards.

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James Watt College

Matthew Boulton College

Sutton Coldfield College



Matthew Boulton College is home to the UK's only Professional Services Sector Academy, providing students with a unique learning model that blends academic study and work experience.

Our Greater Birmingham Professional Services Academy has been going strong for 7 years!

The comprehensive academy programme has over 30 employers currently working alongside students to develop their professional skills, deepen their knowledge of the sector and raise awareness of sector-specific roles and career opportunities within business, law, finance and property.

Employers including BNP Paribas Personal Finance, Deutsche Bank, Deloitte, Gateley Plc, KPMG, Lloyds and Wesleyan are part of the community initiative and are already making a

Matthew Boulton College

positive collective impact on the future careers of young people from a range of different backgrounds.

Commenting on this year, Jan Myatt, said: "It's been truly brilliant to work with our partners and deliver our programme whilst adhering to Covid restrictions. We have been able to re-shape our programme to meet the "new normal" and this was evidenced with the Al Rayan

Recruitment and HR team delivering a session on "How to prepare for an interview" by using Teams."

Here is a snapshot of some of the highlights for the GBPSA this year.

New appointment set to reignite business growth



Vicky Waters from BNP Paribas was appointed to the role of GBPSA chair taking over from Andy Argyle from KPMG.

After 6 years' impactful service, Andy Argyle from KPMG stepped down as Chair of The Greater Birmingham Professional Service Academy (GBPSA) and was succeeded by Vicky Waters, who heads talent, career and development at BNP Paribas Personal Finance.

This key development means that the GBPSA, will have a new direction and will continue to progressively provide local students with direct access to a variety of careers and opportunities within the region's business professional services sector.

Speaking of her new position, Vicky Waters said: "I am honoured to be the new Chair of the academy, which holds such an important place in the local community. Andy has been extremely influential in his role and has left a huge imprint that I am sure will help make it easier for me to build on. I endeavour to use my skills and experience to help move the academy forward and am looking forward to doing so."

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James Watt College

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Short listed for an award or 3!

We were delighted to round off the year with the news that the GBPSA had been commended for its best practice and innovation at the AOC Awards.

We were commended in the category of: The Careers and Enterprise Company Award for Innovation in Careers and Enterprise

And that's not all the college was also commended in the category of: City & Guilds Award for College Engagement with Employers.

The Association of Colleges' Beacon Awards celebrate the best and most innovative practice among UK colleges each year. They are awarded every year by AoC to provide recognition for excellence and innovation, acknowledging the talents of staff at all levels. They highlight the breadth and quality of education in the college sector.



HOME

Commenting on the two commendations Suzie Branch-Haddow said: "It was a real moment of celebration when our work was recognised by the Association of Colleges and we received two Commended Status Beacon Awards to go alongside the recognition earlier in the year from Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce as a finalist in the Excellence in Education and Training Category.

Chambers of commerce awards

The GBPSA also made the shortlist for the annual Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce Awards.

The 2020 ceremony recognised business excellence for companies across 12 different award categories.

We were shortlisted in the excellence in training and education category and although we did not win we were pleased to have made the shortlist –

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Business Development

Communities first

Word from our Chair



One small step

Students and staff at Sutton Coldfield College are taking part in an innovative project to deliver a game -based learning platform.

Working with a company called Applio - an innovative Ed Tech designed to make digital games-based learning a mainstream learning tool in the FE sector.

Sutton Coldfield College

The key areas of innovation are:

- **Colleges can create/customise their own engaging content without needing expensive and complex games design and development skills.**
- **A wide range of subjects and learning goals and can be addressed by creating different types of experiences contextualised to specific learner needs**
- **Learners can play multi-player which allows group learning opportunities not typically associated with digital games Ed Tech.**



The goal is to develop an effective new class of tool that colleges can use for multiple purposes. For example, the system can be used to create a 10-minute game designed to introduce the phonetic alphabet to an engineering student or a 2-hour game to allow a group of students to explore the mental health issues faced by young adults.

Sponsored by the Ufi Vocational Technology Trust, Applio has been working with staff and students to explore, test and refine features and approaches for inclusion in the product. To date work has taken place primarily in conjunction with the Business and Professional Services team at Sutton Coldfield College but the ultimate objective is to roll it out across the broader BMet community.

The formal project is scheduled to complete during Spring term 2021 but expanded use is planned to continue well beyond this.

Commenting on the project, Anna Jackson Vice Principal at Sutton Coldfield College, said: "We are delighted to be involved in this ground-breaking project.

"We are the first college in the UK to have access to a technology of this type and the feedback and support it is providing is proving invaluable in shaping the solution not just for our students but for many other students around the country.

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Student Success

We love celebrating student success at BMet – it’s why we are here!

A levels

Sutton Coldfield College celebrated exam success with A level and BTEC students in August.

Students achieved a 99% pass rate and 55% of students were guaranteed their place at university on the spot.

The vocational pass rate for Level 3 students was 100%.

Here is what some of our students had to say:

Chloe was thrilled with her A Level results – she achieved a B in History, a B in Psychology and an A in Sociology. Chloe said: “I am thrilled with my results, which will get me into my university of choice – the University of Birmingham.”

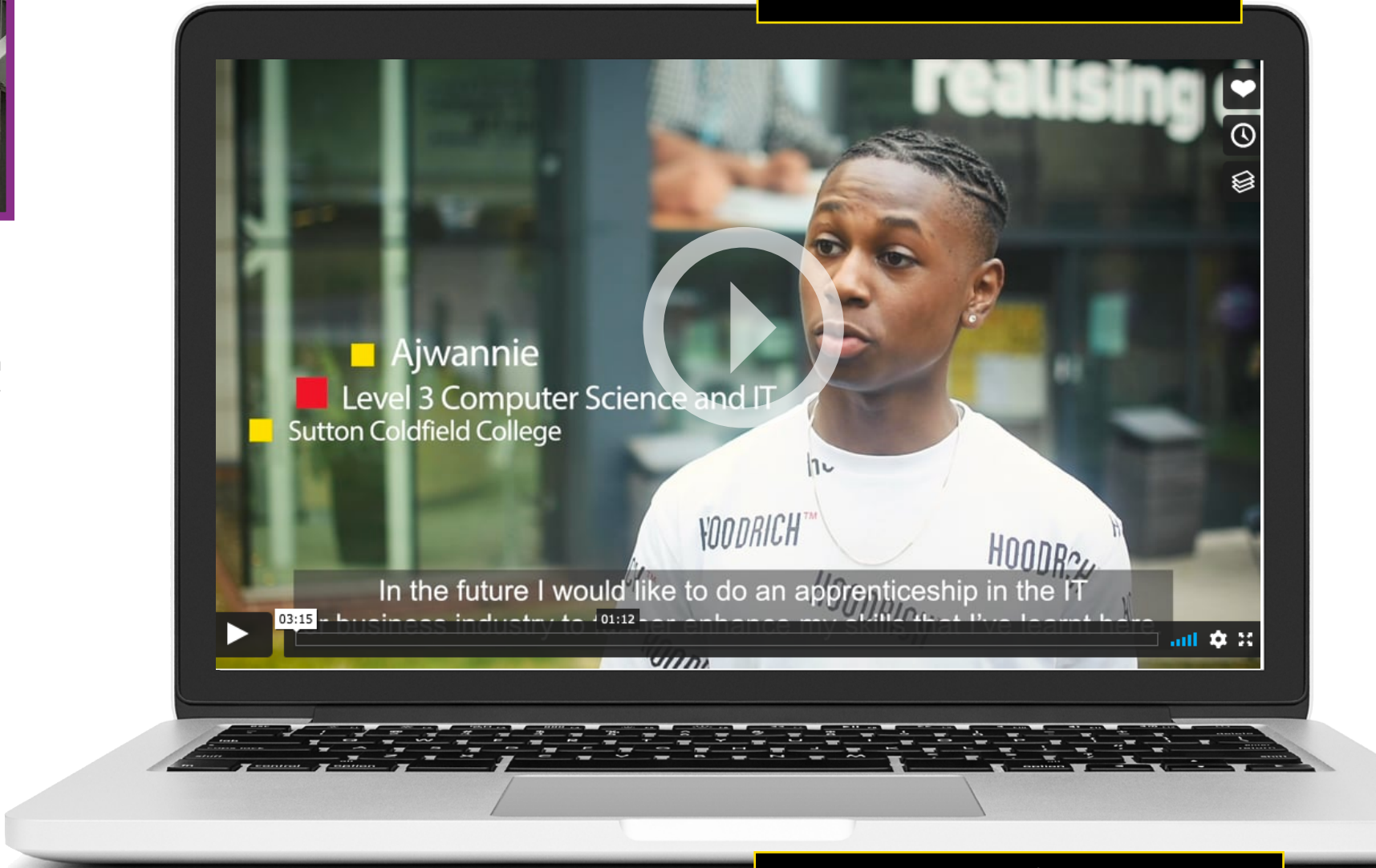
Ana was ecstatic with her Level 3 Extended Diploma in Art and Design at Sutton Coldfield College. She said: “I am really happy today, as I got a distinction which is a top level grade! My next step is to go to Plymouth University and to later gain a rewarding career in architecture.”

Jemima was over the moon with her BTEC Extended Diploma in Applied Science. She said: “I got a D*D* and a Distinction. I am over the moon with my results, as I can now go to the University of Warwick to study Biomedical Sciences.”

Ajwannie is looking forward to the future and pleased with his Level 3 Extended Diploma in Computer Science and IT.

Watch this short film on our students celebrating their success!

Click here to watch the video



Record GCSE passes give BMet students a professional boost

Our GCSE students had excellent news this summer after receiving their results – in what proved to be a record year of success for the college.

900 students achieved grade 4s and above, all of whom left school without a Grade 4 in English or Maths GCSE.

Of those 900 students – 689 were aged between 16-18 and 211 were adults (19+) who were returning to education.

487 students secured a 4 or above in GCSE in English Language while 413 students gained a 4 or above in Maths.

2020 has been a great year of progression for BMet's 16-18 students. With 617 students improving on their English grade compared with school and 832 students improving on the maths grade achieved at school.

"Our results show that whatever age or learning stage you are at, it's never too late for you to gain your GCSEs and follow your dreams," said Cliff Hall, Principal at BMet.

"Many of our students have come to us without a GCSE English or maths Grade 4 and we have helped them achieve great grades. Securing these grades means that they can go on to fulfil their future ambition be it going on to university, higher level courses, employment or start an apprenticeship.

"We are particularly pleased with the progression that some of our students have made this year leapfrogging from lower to higher grades. It shows what you can achieve if you don't give up!



[Click here to watch the video](#)

HE Graduation 2020

We were delighted to host our annual HE gradation this December

This year was a little different to usual, as we hosted a virtual event due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.

The Coronavirus pandemic has changed how we all interact with each other, but we wanted to ensure that we still celebrate our students' success. It is a time when we can boldly recognise and celebrate the academic journeys of our higher education learners.

Our HE Graduation is a special event which signifies and marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another – not only for the students themselves but also for the families and friends who have supported and encouraged them throughout this journey.

The college offers a very wide breadth of higher education courses - encompassing Foundation Degrees, Higher Level Apprenticeships, Higher National Certificates, Higher National Diplomas, Degree programmes and many other higher level professional qualifications.

It is an offer that we are proud of and continually seek to expand, so that we can support the skills needs of our region. But most of all today is about our graduates and their own unique stories, highlighting how their higher education experience will positively enhance their future career choices.

Our keynote speaker at this year's event was Shabana Mahmood, MP



Shabana was elected as the Member of Parliament for Birmingham Ladywood in 2010. She was born and brought up in the heart of our city, attending a local school as a child and living within the constituency.

Since being elected Shabana has served in several ministerial roles, including Shadow Home Affairs Minister, Shadow Business Minister and most recently as Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Shabana currently serves as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, an influential committee responsible for overseeing government expenditure that ensures the transparency and accountability of public finances.

At the event we congratulate their success, celebrate their achievements and extend our very best wishes for the future.

Business Development at BMet



Business development is a vital focus for BMet. As a community-focused college we strive to respond to ever-changing local business needs, including responding to employment shortages and re-addressing the skills gap.

Speaking on this year, Suzie Branch-Haddow, Director of Employer Engagement, at BMet, said: "We would like to thank all of our clients, employers and networks. The level of support they provided to

both us and people across our region by working with us to look at how we can deliver innovative and rewarding work experience programmes and career opportunities through our apprenticeship programmes was phenomenal.

"This year it's been particularly inspiring, and rewarding, to work with clients in "key worker" industries such as pharmaceutical, transport, food production, finance and support staff within those businesses and organisations whilst fighting Covid19. On behalf of everyone at BMet: thank you."



BMet "works it." with new programme



November saw the Business Development team launch a new work experience programme for students called "Work it."

The programme is set to build strong partnerships with employers across the region who recognise the importance of good quality work placements for students and can offer mentoring support. Mentoring is a key aspect of the programme as it will help to coach the learner and on the reverse side allow the seasoned employer to benefit from fresh new ideas and enthusiasm.

"Work it." aims to motivate the next generation of talent by giving them a taste of work and offering a useful stepping-stone between education and starting a career. The programme will introduce young people to workplace etiquette, develop their soft skills and help them to navigate the world of work.

Employers are invited to get involved by offering placements for learners helping to make a positive difference in their lives.

It's not all one way, by working so closely with the talent of the future employers will gain direct insight into the next generation of talent.

Placements will also help learners mature, develop their confidence, boost their CV, improve their employability and inform their career choices.

BMet students are encouraged to find their own work placements, but the college Work Placement Coordinators are always available to help and will guide them through the process.

As the programme grows the aim is for the college to have a catalogue of employers that students can approach for placements.

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BMet puts Jess Phillips MP in the hot seat



BMet's Director of Employer Engagement – Suzie Branch-Haddow, hosted a virtual equality and diversity event featuring Labour MP, Jess Philips, in November.

The forward-thinking collaborative IMPowered webinar was organised by national solicitors Irwin Mitchell, which had "challenges of gender diversity in the workplace" as the main theme.

Given the duo roles of co-host and interviewer, Suzie was joined by 300 guests online including BMet's newly appointed work placement officers and its industry placement officer.

In the role of interviewer, Suzie posed a variety of questions to the dynamic local Labour MP. The questions were from representatives from a variety of sectors including, legal, recruitment, financial, charitable, local authorities, the NHS and the healthcare industry.



During the enlightening session, the Yardley MP answered questions relating to her family life and background, diversity in the workplace, female empowerment, facing social media abuse and the impact of Covid-19.

Commenting on her involvement, Suzie said: "Being in a (virtual) room with like-minded local organisations that share BMet's equality and diversity-based business vision was inspirational and definitely reinforced the importance of having a supportive network of influential and inspiring women like Jess Philips."

BMet continues to actively seek opportunities to partner with local organisations which are a beacon of positive change for the diverse communities that it represents.

For more information about the work that the BMet business development team does with local employers, which includes supplying highly skilled future employees through apprenticeship programmes, please visit:

www.bmet.ac.uk/employers

Communities first



BMet is supporting Black History Month this October – so get involved!

Here's some of the activities we've planned for you, to help bring **African Caribbean culture** to life!:

- Sessions with inspirational local guest speakers
- A live historical timeline of Black history
- A showcase of Black contributions to the LGBTQ rights movement
- Student and staff competitions
- Authentic Caribbean cuisine at BMet, plus much more!

Most activities will be presented virtually. Please contact your tutor or student enrichment team for more information!

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion are at the heart of BMet.

BMet

BMet celebrated Black History Month in style

Students and staff at BMet College embraced Black History Month with a series of unique forward-thinking and engaging cultural activities.

Throughout October, there was the opportunity for the college community to take part in range of virtual and college-hosted events.

All activity was designed to celebrate positive contributions of key figures within the African Caribbean community. Cliff Hall, Principal at BMet, said: "One of the best things about BMet is how ethnically diverse we are. So, it's important that we take the opportunity that Black History

Month represents as a catalyst to reflect on the past, celebrate achievements and look forward to the future.

"Equality and diversity and inclusion are at the heart of BMet and we positively support activities and events which highlight the diversity of our communities. Black History Month is another great way to tell these important stories." The month-long programme has been organised and hosted by the college's Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) group and student experience teams.

The aim of the activities is to provide an insightful schedule to inspire minds and encourage open debate about historical and current affairs.

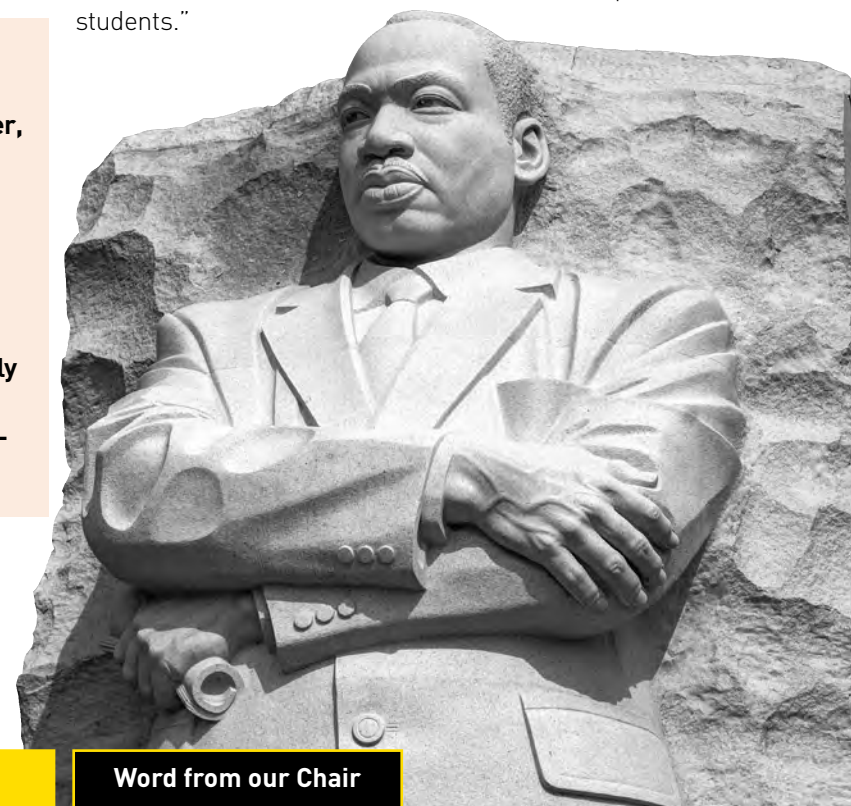
Students were able to:

- join online sessions with inspirational local guest speakers including acclaimed artist and photographer, Vanley Burke.
- take part in a virtual event showcasing black contributions to the LGBTQ rights movement.
- taste authentic Caribbean cuisine at all three of the BMet sites – James Watt College, Matthew Boulton College and Sutton Coldfield College.
- join virtual sessions discussing topics that particularly affect the African Caribbean community, including mental health and wellbeing and the growth of black-led businesses.

Displays featured people who have made a positive impact in society, as well as inspirational college employees of African Caribbean origin.

Speaking of Black History Month and the college's activities, Natalie Alleyne, Chair of the BAME group, said: "It is so important for the college, particularly now with recent events that have adversely affected the Black community, to address significant issues and showcase the immensely positive contribution of African Caribbean culture to society.

"While I truly believe that the unique culture should be celebrated every day, the month is an opportunity to inspire minds and to discuss relevant issues that will impact our students."



STUDENT COMMISSION ON RACIAL JUSTICE

GIVING STUDENTS A COLLECTIVE VOICE ON RACIAL JUSTICE

BMet is part of the Student Commission on Racial Justice.

The Student Commission on Racial Justice is a national student-led project that will give thousands of young people across the country a voice on racial justice and BMet is proud to be part of it.

Leaders Unlocked is bringing together students from nine partnering colleges to form the Student Commission. The other partnering colleges are:

Barnsley College
Kirklees College
Leyton Sixth Form College
London South East Colleges
Long Road Sixth Form College
New City College
The Sheffield College
York College

The Commission will give college students a platform to have a collective voice on racial justice, share their views and experiences, and to make recommendations for government, education and other sectors to take account of.

Cliff Hall, said: "We hope that the impact (of the project) within college will be one where our students and staff, especially our BAME students and staff, can create space for exchange of ideas and experiences that will strengthen their sense of pride and self-esteem and that they value learning and working in a truly diverse and anti-racist college. More widely that they take their knowledge and skills out into community engagement in Birmingham and beyond."

BMet joins national festive community campaign to help local food banks

Students and staff across BMet's colleges got into the community and festive spirit by fundraising for local foodbanks, as part of the national #festivefoodbankfriday campaign.

The college joined forces with FE Colleges across the country to support the cause – set up in response to the sharp decline in foodbank donations during Covid-19.

The charitable initiative will mean that many people in the Birmingham area will benefit from

much-needed monetary donations and essential items as Christmas approaches.

Cliff Hall, Principal at BMet, said: "It is a privilege and very rewarding for our college community to be able to take part in such a worthy cause, that will help many people in the local area."

The national Just Giving page can be found here.

[Click here](#)



A final word from our Chair – Sir Dexter Hutt



power of a butterfly flapping its wings in the Amazon to contribute down the line to a hurricane in Asia. Or a virus, originating in Wuhan in late 2019, to significantly impact on the outcome of the American Presidential election in late 2020, and through a likely change in American foreign policy, affect the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world. And if there was ever any remaining doubt about the existence of globalisation and the interdependence of the countries on Earth, then Covid19 has surely settled the case.

“As the year 2020 has progressed, I have, time and time again, been reminded of chaos theory, the science of surprises, which teaches us to expect the unexpected. And of one of its principles, the Butterfly Effect, which grants the

“2020 has given many of us a new perspective on our society – on its diversity, its inequalities – and its strengths. The NHS staff at all levels, the care staff looking after the elderly, won our admiration and respect – we have recognised the personal risks and sacrifices that so many have made. And our response to the coronavirus crisis has

underlined the critical – and very varied – role of our key workers, many of whom are in relatively low paid sectors. And what other feeling, other than gratitude, could we have for our medical experts and scientists who have guided us through 2020, and led us to the promised land of the vaccine?

“We at BMet, have also been affected by the flapping of the butterfly’s wings as Covid19 impacted on the work of the College. In my role as Chair, I was concerned as to how we would respond to the challenge. And then somewhat awed by the speed and the quality of the response. Of our leadership and our teaching staff. And of

all those who don’t teach but are essential to the running of the College – our key staff. And of our students. The result has been that learning has continued apace, that staff and students have learned new digital skills and ways of working together. And that as a community our resilience and adaptability has brought a new confidence. And a determination to contribute to meeting the needs of our Birmingham community as the impact of the pandemic, and of Brexit, unfolds in 2021.

“I take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas. And – with fingers crossed – a Happy New Year!”



2020 has given many of us a new perspective on our society – on its diversity, its inequalities – and its strengths.



For all our latest news visit bmet.ac.uk/news

2020

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